

TO: Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
FROM: Jose Reyes Ramirez, Engagement Coordinator, Basic Rights Oregon
DATE: 03/21/2025
RE: Support for SB 703

Dear Chair Reynolds and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jose Reyes Ramirez (he/him/el) and I am writing to urge you to vote YES to advance SB 703.

The criminalization of immigration has forced immigrants to face a unique set of challenges in the United States. One of the most common barriers that undocumented immigrants face is the legal system. The legal system is harsh and has punitive policies that include detention, deportation, and isolation for those entering the United States.

Additionally, queer immigrants are oftentimes seeking asylum in the United States. Immigrants may be fleeing from their home countries due to discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. For undocumented individuals in detention, it is incredibly difficult for them to obtain legal services. Lack of legal services and of representation may force individuals to be deported to their home countries where their lives could be at risk.

It is imperative that undocumented immigrants have access to free legal services because it ensures that their rights in the United States are safeguarded. Legal representation offers immigrants an opportunity to remain with their families and to avoid any form of unjust prosecution in the United States or back home. SB 703 ensures that there is due process, and it grants eligible undocumented immigrants an opportunity to become U.S. citizens.

Moreover, the legal process is very costly. For an Adjustment of Status, the standalone application will increase to \$1,440 on April 1. The legal process is not linear, and rising costs can be the difference between permanent protections or deportation. Eliminating the financial burden that comes along with the pursuit of legal protection would guarantee immigration relief for many undocumented immigrants.

Lastly, we urge you to pass SB 703 as it reduces the barriers for queer and undocumented immigrants in the state. Together we can work towards creating an inclusive society where we are all valued, respected, and able to live our lives free from discrimination.

Jose Ramirez